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ABSTRACT

Three of the four papers in this collection focus on reasons why many Asian Americans end up in dead-end jobs and suggest ways of avoiding this situation. In "Views of an Educator," Nasser Sharify provides insights from an educators' perspective about finding and maintaining a successful career, and recommends that Asian-Americans pursue careers "American style, not Asian style," as well as encouraging more self-confidence with less timidity and "Asian nobility." Peter R. Young's "Experiences of an Asian/American Librarian" describes how the stereotype of Asian Americans as technical service librarians prevents promotion to increased managerial responsibility, and suggests strategies for planning a successful career, e.g., being flexible, not accepting other people's definitions of success, and not being ruled by fear of failure. Ernest A. Muro's "Advice from a Corporate Executive" outlines a four-part career plan consisting of: (1) developing a basic liberal arts undergraduate and a specialized graduate education; (2) continuing a critical self-assessment of weaknesses to eliminate obstacles; (3) cultivating contacts with people who can help plan an open-ended career; and (4) planning a library career strategy before it requires implementation, recognizing both the opportunities and limitations of the profession. In the final article, "Library Services for the Asian American Community," Sharad Karkhanis presents an action agenda for what libraries should do to enhance services for Asian Americans. (SD)

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HOW TO AVOID DEAD END IN YOUR CAREER: AN ASIAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

and

LIBRARY SERVICES FOR THE ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Papers of the 1987 Program of the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association June 1987 San Francisco, California

Edited by
SHARAD KARKHANIS

Asian / Pacific American Librarians Association
- Affiliated with the American Library Association -
New York, New York
1988

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PROGRAM

HOW TO AVOID A DEAD END IN YOUR CAREER:

AN ASIAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

PRESIDING: Asha Capoor, President

SPEAKERS: PETER R. YOUNG, Chief, Cataloging Div., Copyright Office, Library of Congress

ERNEST A. MURO, Advanced Library Concepts, Honlulu

NASSAR SHARIFY, Former Dean, Pratt Institute, New York

DATE: Tuesday, June 30th, 1987, 9:30 to 11 a.m.

PLACE: Ramada Renaissance, R. No. 1

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: Sunday, June 28th, 1987, 8 to 10 p.m.

PLACE: Meridien Hotel, Gamay Room

PRESIDING: Asha Capoor, President

AGENDA: Minutes, Bylaw changes, reports from committees, introduction of new officers, new business

INTRODUCTION

The dead end in your career is a common phenomena faced by many in almost all careers. However, the questions such as: Are Asian Americans more prone to dead end careers than others? Do they end up in dead end careers more because of their weakness in English language fluency? Do cultural and traditional characteristics contribute to their ending up in dead end jobs? needed to be explored. The papers presented here attempt to analyze the causes for ending up in a dead job and offer advice and strategies in avoiding the dead end careers.

Dr. Nasser Sharify, former Dean of the Pratt Library School in Brooklyn provides insights from the educator's point of view, reflecting with humorous anecdotes from his own career and reminiscing his days as a young man arriving in America and only able to speak in broken English to his recent eminence as Dean Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Library Science at Pratt Institute. Sharify argues that "we should try to play the same game of success, American style and not Asian style." He has two secrets for his success: he never considered himself short, and he never felt he was a foreigner. "Without showing any arrogance," he explains, "I always considered myself on the par with and in the same level as my American colleagues; and thus I was treated as such. And until today, I do not recall any charming lady ignoring me because I was short."

Peter R. Young, Chief of Cataloging Division of the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, provides a comprehensive assessment of the problem. He speaks of the "stereotype of the Asian American technical services librarian," as well as cultural and linguistic differences, lack of facility in speaking and writing English, passivity, and no-risk value orientation of Asian Americans. In Young's opinion, some of the strategies which might help Asian Americans in planning a successful career development are: be flexible about your career options, avoid assigning blame, don't accept other people's definition of success, not to be ruled by fear or failure, seek out opportunities for learning and changing, and learn to market yourself.

Ernest A. Muro, President of Vendor Relations, a professional consulting company in Annandale, N.J. focuses on "cultural differences and their limitations that postpone or prevent advancement of Asian American librarians."

He notes that, "progressive advancement and mobility within the library service profession, requires that both advantages and disadvantages of the profession and of the Asian American librarian be addressed."

The remarks on library services for the Asian American community made by the editor at another meeting at the same Convention are also included in the hope that they will provide a few suggestions in expanding the role of libraries in serving the growing Asian population in America.

Sharad Karkhanis
Kingsborough Community
College Library
Brooklyn, NY 11235
January 1988

HOW TO AVOID DEAD END IN YOUR CAREER: AN ASIAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

VIEWS OF AN EDUCATOR

By
DR. NASSER SHARIFY

DR. NASSER SHARIFY, Dean Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Library and Information Science at Pratt Institute served as its Dean for nearly twenty years. Internationally known educator and professional in the field of library and information science, Dr. Sharify has conducted numerous studies and contributes extensively to professional journals. He holds an MLS and DLS from Columbia University, and is receipient of several awards and honors.

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Madam President and distinguished colleagues:

I have been asked by President Asha Capoor to make certain remarks as an educator about "how to avoid a dead-end in your career." To me there is absolutely no dead end in anyone's career. Oh yes, there is only one. If you are an Asian American not born in the United States you cannot be elected the President of the United States.

But indeed there are social, political and cultural obstacles that ought to be removed. There are problems and difficulties that ought to be faced and solved. There are also psychological barriers and walls that ought to be broken down.

You see, we are what we conceive ourselves to be. If we consider our capabilities, intelligence and talent limited, they will be limited. If we conceive our right to a good and prosperous life limited, they will always remain limited. We then have to accept a humble life and leave pleasure and prosperity to others and should never complain.

We are as powerful as we think we are. "Power" is not external to us. It is completely internal. If we believe that our potential power will be limited, it will be limited; and, we shall live a powerless life and then we have to let other people manage and conduct our lives. If we have no ambition and we are ready to accept "little," our share of success will always remain "little."

When we think we can only make a humble contribution to our society, then we need extra courage to give what we have. I have never forgotten my first speaking engagement in the United States 35 years ago. Only three months after my arrival in the U.S. from my home country, Iran, I was invited to speak to a group of businessmen in Danville, Virginia. I hardly knew enough English to express simple thoughts, let alone give an informative talk to a group of successful businessmen about international affairs. But, I accepted the challenge. I went to Virginia and I gave the talk. Don't ask me what did I say and especially don't ask me whether my audience understood me or not. Chances are they did not. The important fact was that I accepted the challenge and I gave the talk. Believe it or not they also paid me handsomely. In fact when they asked me in their letter of invitation about my fee I gave them a high figure. Once I placed a high value on myself, these successful businessmen had no choice but to attach a high value to my contributions. I then became a well-known figure in Danville, Virginia even before I arrived in that small Southern town as newspapers had published stories about me and Iran.

I had worked hard for my talk and I was only ready to give that talk. But as soon as I arrived, the night before my talk was scheduled, I was contacted by the local radio station. I was immediately taken to the radio station for an interview that I could not refuse. That was really difficult. I was not prepared for it "Now the whole town would know how poor my English is," I murmured to myself as I was escorted to the studio. This is the risk one takes. But let me confess that this took less courage on my part than accepting the initial invitation to talk to the group of businessmen.

You see, the first step requires a lot of courage, the second step a little less, because you are already there. As you take more steps you require less courage but more wisdom. The wisdom that I am sure, you will acquire along the way. As you achieve each success the fight for more success becomes easier and easier. And each success, without much effort on your part, brings more success. Not only is there no dead end, but there is no end in achieving success.

Thirty-five years ago, life in the United States for a foreigner or a foreign born was quite different. Indeed, it was much more difficult. To illustrate this vast difference, permit me to tell you a personal story, a true story that I once told before a distinguished international audience 15 years ago in Budapest, at the IFLA conference, during my talk on international dimensions of library education.

After my famous talk in Virginia, while I was still a student at Columbia University, I was invited to give a number of talks in different cities in the United States. In this little town in New Jersey I was invited to speak to a group of attractive young ladies attending high school. I must confess, considering the special charm of the audience, I was particularly delighted for this opportunity and the talk went rather well. After I finished speaking, practically everyone in the audience jumped out of her seat and ran towards me. Like a mass of happy children, who have suddenly discovered something very new and amusing, they gathered around me. I was intoxicated by this rare moment of happiness and felt assured that I must have uttered the right words of wisdom to have stimulated such an unbelievable reaction.

I was right in the middle of the group and everyone was pushing to get closer to the center when the school photographer approached us. As soon as I saw the round cold and lifeless eye of the camera staring at us to record on film and then on paper, their enthusiasm and my extreme happiness for a successful talk, practically everyone who could reach, extended her arm from right and left, and placed a finger on me, on my shoulder, on my arms, even on my chest. Turning to a lifeless statue, not understanding the meaning of this perhaps affectionate gesture, I stood there motionless, and could utter no words as I did not know what to say.

The picture was taken and then the delicate hands and fingers were dropped one by one. Astonished still, I moved a bit in my place and felt somewhat relieved. I gathered all my energy so that I could pronounce my words distinctly and I said: "I am very proud that you have invited me to talk about Iran, I am also delighted that you wanted to take a picture with me." I then took a deep breath to gain courage, and I asked: "Can you now tell me why you had to place your finger on me, while the photographer took our picture?" Happily, innocently, a few of them jumped up and down and said: "Oh, that... we wanted to show this picture to" one said; "my mother," another said "my grandfather" and I could not hear the rest of them as they tried to answer my question all at the same time, "so that we could tell we have touched a Persian!" they all said.

I cannot describe how I felt. I was not unhappy, nor did I feel humiliated. I was somewhat astonished but quite amused. They laughed and I laughed with them. I must say the incident did not help my sense of ego as I thought I had given a rather good talk and I had assured myself that the displayed enthusiasm was for what I said, rather than from where I came.

Thirty-five years ago in that small town in New Jersey young people seemed interested in other cultures and international affairs, but still, the existence of a man from Persia amongst them was a novelty.

Thirty-five years have passed and technological advances have caused the world to shrink. The distance between New Jersey and Tehran or Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand has become unbelievably shorter. This shrinking involves not only the reduction of the time required for transportation and communication of men, ideas and information, but even more strikingly, an increase in the variety of cultures who come into close contact with each other.

Thanks to satellite technology, mass-media has brought international news into almost every living room and every car in the United States. School teachers and college professors have tried to treat their subject of instruction internationally. And, the government has subsidized numerous research projects dealing with other nations. People, therefore, have learned more about other cultures, not only about Iran, Singapore, Philippines, Korea but the whole world.

Since my first visit, I have gone back many times to various towns of New Jersey. Now when I talk to young people, I find to my extreme distress that no one but no one is any longer interested in touching me, to place a finger on me, or even to take a picture with me. As a man born in Persia, I find myself no longer a novelty in small American towns or indeed in other small towns of the world where I have spoken.

I may be quite naive, but I sincerely believe that the American society like many other Western societies has been transformed, in the last quarter of the century into an international society in which there should never be a dead end in an Asian-American librarian's career. An Asian-American librarian should benefit from the same privileges and the same career opportunities.

Thanks to the technological advances in terms of transportation and communication media, man is no longer isolated, no matter how small and remote the village in which he lives and works. It is true that at the present time access to international information is still, in a great many corners of the world, limited and in many places non-existent. But undoubtedly, the man of tomorrow will be a universal man and his concerns and needs will be of a universal nature. No one can prevent that.

Just to cite a few examples of the progress in data communications in Asian societies, according to Dr. Jackson's talk at the general session of SLA meetings in Los Angeles 20 days ago, in Japan the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation, after the breakup of AT&T, is now the largest telecommunication career in the world. Japan has launched several domestic commercial satellites. Facsimile communication networks services are fully available. The fifth generation of computers bring, yet another promise for great progress in access to information and data communication in Japan as well as in other countries of the pacific region.

In 1985 Taiwan began an ambitious telecommunication development plan and 5.2 billion U.S. dollars were appropriated for network digitalization over the period of 4-5 years. Fiber optic cables are being used to link Taiwan offshore Islands. The new national library of Taiwan will be considered as the center for utilizing telecommunication and networking thoughout the Island of Taiwan. The Peoples Republic of China has developed its own capability to launch its own communication satellite which enhances China's access to international information. In 1983, Indonesia developed its own dedicated satellite system using 400 stations, and automated library systems are installed in almost every large library in the pacific region.

In the United States for many years, access to Chinese, Japanese and Korean (known as CJK) literature has been a major focus for the Library of Congress and other research libraries. Members of RLIN now have access to CJK bibliographical information through indigenous scripts and not transliterated form which has caused a lot of confusion for those who are engaged in the act of transliteration and those who are supposed to read and understand the result. In fact, a recent doctoral dissertation at Columbia University by Dr. Tehrani, also a Pratt graduate, suggests that: "transliteration for the most part has created an obstacle between the reader and his/her needed information... This obstacle has to be removed" she says, and "today's technology is quite capable of removing it."

Contribution of Asian librarians and information professionals to American and world librarianship have been tremendous. They have become a vital force in the profession. This very meeting at ALA, San Francisco, and other meetings held during the conferences of other associations have attracted the attention of American librarians to Asian-American librarians, and the presence of Asian American librarians in international conferences of IFLA, FID and UNESCO has attracted the world's attention and respect. The Asian scholars through the East-West center in Honolulu, have brought the wisdom of the East to the West.

As you can imagine, throughout my career as an educator over a quarter of a century, I have had numerous Asian students. The great majority of these students have been excellent and many have demonstrated extraordinary promise for the library and information science profession. Some twenty years ago when I was teaching at Pittsburgh University I had so many Asian students that I had to create a section of cataloging course only for them. They were extremely talented and hard working. Many Asian students at Pratt Institute, because of their own capabilities and dedications and because of my affection for them have received scholarships and assistantships. In fact, last year, two students from Korea and Peoples Republic of China were running the school's entire information science lab and teaching other students the on-line search strategies.

My affection for Asian Americans has gone beyond the boundary of the school and the library profession. Two years ago my son married a beautiful Asian American lady from Hong Kong. In six weeks time I will be a grandfather to an Asian American child.

When you see an Asian librarian, you see dedication, you see determination, you see thoughtfulness, you see discipline, you see energy and you see perfection. I salute all of you for what you are and what you bring to the world of librarianship.

In order to avoid the dead-end, what we need is a little more courage and a little less modesty. We need a little more self-confidence and little less timidity and Asian nobility.

We should try to play the game of success American style and not Asian style. I have two secrets which I wish to unfold today. I never considered myself short, and in the United States I never felt I was a foreigner. Without showing any arrogance always I considered myself on equal par with and on the same level as my American colleagues and thus I was treated as such. And until today, I do not recall any <u>charming lady</u> ignoring me because I was short.

"Attitude" represents our personality and demonstrates the manner in which we conduct our life, both professionally and personally. "Articulation" functions as a dress for our personality. It represents us to our world in the way we wish to be represented before our qualities and shortcomings are discovered. Perhaps the two important keys to success are attitude and articulation, and I wish to leave these two thoughts with my distinguished Asian American colleagues and than them for giving me the opportunity of sharing the views of an old educator.

HOW TO AVOID DEAD END IN YOUR CAREER: AN ASIAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

EXPERIENCES OF AN ASIAN/AMERICAN LIBRARIAN

By
PETER R. YOUNG

PETER R. YOUNG, Chief, Cataloging Division, Copyright Office, Library of Congress holds a Bachelor's degree from the College of Wooster in Ohio and an MLS from Columbia University. Before joining the Copyright Office, he served as Assistant Director of Grand Rapids Public Library and Head Cataloger of Franklin and Marshall College Library.

"If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else."
Laurence J. Peter

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I. Introduction: Who are Asian/Pacific American Librarians?

Asian/Pacific American Librarians constitute an ethnic minority of library professionals in the US, comprising 5% of ALA members. The 1980 census indicates that Asian/Pacific Americans constitute only 1.5% of the total US population.

Most Asian/Pacific American professional librarians work in technical services departments of large research libraries where their non-Western language skills are used to catalog and process East, South, and Southeast Asian language materials. We constitute over half of the minority professionals in ARL institutions. Many of us sense, however, that Asian/Pacific American librarians do not share the same success and advancement opportunities that the profession affords non-minorities.

The stereotype of the Asian-American technical services librarian is often cited as a cultural liability, preventing promotion to positions of increased managerial responsibility. Despite the institutional need for non-Western language abilities, facility with Asian languages appears to be a cultural factor limiting career advancement and mobility for the non-Western librarian. In this ethnic career trap, some of us find that our first year of professional library experience is repeated over

and over again throughout our careers. Instead of assuming progressively more rewarding and responsible duties as we mature in our professional careers, we burn out performing the boring repetitive duties required by our clerical careers.

My talk this morning explores the causes of dead end jobs and outlines a strategy to develop a personal career agenda for overcoming those traps which prevent us from achieving the satisfaction and reward Asian/Pacific American librarians want in our professional careers.

II. Dead End Problems: What Causes Asian/Pacific American Librarian to be in Dead End Jobs?

The cultural and linguistic differences which account for the distinctness of Asian/Pacific minorities in contemporary American society also supply research libraries those skills required to process non-English language resources. As a result, potential for developing skill and ability in administration and management tend to be ignored, overlooked, or underused.

A lack of facility in speaking and writing English presents major obstacles to those A/P Americans aspiring to career advancement through library management. Not all of us have been as fortunate as Sen. Daniel Inouye who received personalized English instruction from fellow wounded soldiers recovering in an Army hospital in Europe during WWII. Our cultural heritage of personal modesty and acquiescence are often perceived as counter to the Western emphasis on individual achievement recognition and self-promotion. Behaviorial changes made to conform to Western standards appear to contradict the cultural traditions which, for many of us, form the basis of our family training and upbringing.

Asian/Pacific Americans are often seen as a passive group for whom security is valued more than risk-taking. Individuals attempting to counter this perception of passivity through more agressive behavior are often frustrated and dissapointed at the results. Consequently, Asian/Pacific American librarians tend to avoid those controversial political issues confronting society and our institutions. We often tend to turn away from open discussion of social issues relating to racial discrimination in employment policy. In a self-fulfilling prophecy, we miss opportunities to develop our self-expression skills which are essential to promotion and success. The reaction of many Asian/Pacific Americans to discrimination is to feel anger, embarrassment, or guilt. We often react with sarcasm, criticizing the profession, the "system", or our colleagues. Or, we are silent.

We are not alone in feeling that many of us hold dead-end jobs. In many ways, American librarians in general soon find that their chosen field is considered a second-rate profession. Examples of effective means of confronting ethnic, professional, or social discrimination are few. Efforts to promote career advancement for Asian/Pacific American librarians suffer further from the diversity of Asian cultural minorities. The variety of distinctive national origins consisting of many different nationalities, cultures, and languages inhibits a single successful minority career advancement and recruitment program effort.

III. Dead End Library Careers: Professional Librararian Career Traps

Why then are there so many dead end jobs in the library and information science field for Asian/Pacific Americans? A major contributing factor involves the image our society has of our profession. Our society stereotypes libraianship as an occupation rather than a profession. The prestige afforded librarians is not on a par with the esteem accorded other professional classes. Librarians are engaged in providing a service, yet the managerial, organizational, and financial skills associated with providing information services are not included in our stereotype. The general public's perception of the librarian is of an orderly, compliant, inoffensive, conforming, nonassertively passive, and unsociable individual.

This negative stereotype of our profession is supported and maintained by the behavior and attitudes of those working in the field. We tend to exhibit behavior that is less poised, less self-assured, less confident, and less achievement oriented than the population in general. Our self-image yearns for a leadership figure, a hero. Instead, we are preoccupied with identifying demeaning examples of librarians portrayed in the commercial media.

With this negative self-image, burn out, frustration, and low job satisfaction among librarians is natural. Indeed, under these conditions, it is a wonder that new professionals continue to enter the field. Dead end jobs in a second-rate occupation are hardly appealing to the best and brightest amongst our college graduates considering professional degree programs. The concerns many of our fellow librarians express about the lack of career advancement and opportunity in the profession are echoed by Asian/Pacific American Librarians who experience a heightened sense of frustration an burnout from being a racial sub-minority in a minority profession. We will not break this vicious career trap until we examine our attitudes and our perceptions of ourselves.

Seeking alternatives to the stereotypical image of the dead-end Asian/Pacific American librarian means developing realistic, direct, honest, clear, positive, and unambiguous assertive behavior. Successful identification and adaptation of alternative career development paradigms are possible for us. These professional options have the potential to provide the rewards and satisfaction required to fulfill our career aspirations.

IV. Strategies for Overcoming Dead End Problems: How Asian/Pacific American Librarians can escape the career trap of librarianship.

A. Identifying personal reward and satisfaction

The return on our investment in our careers depends upon the rewards and satisfaction which result from devoting time and energy to those activities which define our role in society. Our very sense of self-worth is integrally tied up with the work that we do, but our knowledge of what rewards motivate us to devote our life's energy to our work is slight at best. The range of possible rewards and sources of satisfaction resulting from work is infinite. The categories of reward, however, generally fall into three areas:

1 - We work for financial satisfaction;

2 - We pursue the fulfillment and satisfaction of personal interest and self expression;

3 - We work as a vehicle for making a contribution to society.

In order to identify the priority of our personal needs for different types of reward and satisfaction from work, each of us needs to inventory our job-related preferences. Some suggestions include:

1 - Keep a journal or diary of your impressions and reactions to work. Do it as a dialogue between yourself and your work, you and your future, or you and your boss.

2 - Use visualization to imagine the work-related activities of your optimal job. Watch a movie in your mind consisting of images related to your future work.

3 - Write down key words and phrases which capture the ideas that relate to your work, then cluster those words and ideas to identify relationships between concepts which reveal your underlying values and assumptions.

4 - Focus on your feelings about your work using a problem-solving approach to identify sources of tension and frustration.

5 - Inventory your attitudes toward your job in terms of the work itself, the pay, the people you work with, the workplace, the service your provide, and your company, library experiences. Do not let the frustrations of your present situation dominate your planning. Recognize that today's dead-end job will be the dead-end job of your future only if you relinquish your career choices to the control of your current dead-end discouragement.

2. Avoid Assigning Blame:

Future success depends upon our ability to perceive our current situation as temporary. If we spend most of our time talking about the causes of our dead-end career problems, our language leaves no room for opening up new futures and possibilities in our development. Try seeing a 20-year investment in a dead-end job as a successful learning experience which provides important lessons in patience, dedication, and endurance which are necessary to assume other more fulfilling responsibilities.

3. Don't Accept Other People's Definitions of Success:

In the success-oriented decade of the 80's, popular opinion holds that happiness and success are measured solely by the size of one's income and subsequent abilitiy to consume goods and services. It is not easy under these conditions to identify satisfying career objectives which provide non-monetary rewards. It is true, nevertheless, that the only really worthwhile achievements are those that respond to personal commitments drawn from fundamental convictions. Personally defined success criteria are not the same for every librarian, nor are these criteria the same for each of us at different times in our careers. Wealth is not the sole measure of human worth.

4. Do not be Ruled by Fear of Failure:

Don't let the limitations of your current position retard your ability to redefine your career into one of personal satisfaction and self-fulfillment. Many of us are governed by the fear of failure, rather than by the desire for success. Failure often occurs from our acceptance of someone else's criteria for success. Achievement comes only when positive, clear, non-manipulative actions result from a fair and reasonable assessment of your needs and wants.

5. Seek Out Opportunities for Learning and Changing:

The best defense against shyness is, like Garrison Keiler, to seek opportunities to practice self-expression in public situations. Improvement never came through avoiding practice. Seek out opportunities to practice self-expression and marketing in job interview situations, by accepting social invitations, by involvement in community organizations, by entertaining socially, and by developing friendships and professional relationships with a variety of people in librarianship and elsewhere.

6. Learn to Market Yourself:

Marketing is not the same thing as selling; so self-marketing is not equilivant to selling yourself. Marketing consists of a set of professional abilities which involves discipline and skill in a number of different areas. Successful self-marketing starts with under-school, etc.

6 - Inventory your skills, talents, abilities, interests, work style, time, and health by comleting the sentence "One reason I enjoy my work is...."

Once you are able to identify the priority of your individual needs for reward and satisfaction, once you can define your personal attitudes and values, you are ready to formulate plans for developing the satisfying career. In reality, however, it is not so easy. Few of us are in a position to know our motivations fully. What satisfies and fulfills our career needs today, may not provide the same satisfaction throughout our careers. Those who are able to define their requirements in very specific terms, may find that satisfaction is a transient visitor. The key is to learn the process of redefining our requirements, forming the habits which enable us to change and modify our plans to fit our changing circumstances.

B. Successful planning techniques for career development

How then can we acquire the habit of planning and formulating realistic and changing career objectives? Some brief suggestions include the following ideas:

1. Be Flexible About Your Career Options:

Take responsibility for a periodic realistic appraisal of what your career options are. Be realistic in assessing your job skills and standing the communications process which is central to the professional job marketplace. As librarians, Asian/Pacific Americans are in the information industry marketplace and must, to be successful, acquire the ability to function within an expanding job skills market. Not only is this market expanding due to the introduction of digital electronic information processing devices, it is expanding on a geographic scale to include the international marketplace. This large-scale global expansion of the information services or knowledge industry provides unique opportunities to those bi-lingual Asian/Pacific American librarians who have developed the dual abilities of working with information processing machines as well as the ability of working with people.

IV. Conclusion

The Asian/Pacific American librarian's opportunity for career success in the next decade is greater than at any other time in our recent past. How we personally benefit from this opportunity is dependent upon our ability to identify and define optimal work in a personal way and to acquire the self-marketing skills required to make career moves which are personally satisfying and rewarding.

Thank you for the opportunity of sharing these thoughts with you. I wish each of you success in breaking through the dead-end's you encounter in your career.

HOW TO AVOID DEAD END IN YOUR CAREER: AN ASIAN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

ADVISE FROM A CORPORATE EXECUTIVE

By
ERNEST A. MURO

ERNEST A. MURO is President of Vendor Relations a professional consulting company in Annandale, New Jersey.

Mr. Muro's accomplishments include research and consulting at state, national and international levels. He actively participates in programs with the Library of Congress, American Library Association, International Federation of Library Associations, and others. He is involved with standards, and interfaces for libraries and currently chairs the International Standard Book Number Advisory Committee. Mr. Muro is a member of the board for the Library Information and Technology Association, LITA, and the National Informational and Standards Organization, NISO.

Mr. Muro has written and presented papers on Standards and Interfaces, as well as on Library Automation. He has a B.A. from Clarion College and an MLS from Pratt Institute.

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There are several thoughts that I wish to share with you today.

Careers and career paths require careful planning, feeding and grooming.

Individuals no longer have one job or one position for life. U.S. figures indicate that an individual will have five or more jobs within a 30 year career. These jobs may not even be progressive or cumulative or resulting in administration titles. In fact an increasing number of American professionals will change industries during the course of their working career.

These dynamics and demographics affect all professionals, including Asian American Librarians.

Asian American Librarians with unique and rich nationality and ethnic backgrounds find that opportunities are limited. Librarians with very specialized expertise, however also find that mobility and choice of opportunities are also limited.

Thus let us identify some characters of our library profession and the Asian American Librarian.

Library Science and Services consist of a collage of disciplines. Librarians are subject specialists and acquire a host of conventions and standards from the disciplines. Librarians are expected to cover the spectrum of educational disciplines within our contemporary American culture.

It is often cultural differences and their limitations that postpone or prevent advancement of Asian American Librarians. Progressive advancement and mobility within the library service profession, requires that both advantages and disadvantages of the profession and of the Asian American Librarian be addressed.

This review will identify advantages and use such strengths to limit or eliminate disadvantages.

Language, cultural background and ethnic preferences can limit or assist movement within libraries and library related fields e.g. commercial information services.

Cultural and language advantages can move a professional career horizontally across industries and disciplines. For example, from libraries to commercial to education to government, etc. If however language is a disadvantage quite the opposite is true with both horizontal and vertical movement impaired.

As is often the case opportunities are lost when skills are deficient.

As an example, computer programming professionals are usually more effectively managed by an individual with both management and computer programming skills.

Sometimes professional positions that appear to be an opportunity may be inappropriate due to language, management and skill deficiencies.

Most deficiencies can be overcome, and more importantly addressed with careful career path planning. Likewise with continual reassessment an individual can position themselves between the generalist and the specialist.

Asian American Librarians must be willing to move to geographic areas and participate in the subsequent assimilation process and a broader American culture. This may force relocation away from cultural concentrations of choice.

From the above thoughts, here are my suggestions for creating a more opened career:

I. Develop a basic Liberal Arts undergraduate education that is of increasing importance. Then, add areas of concentration and graduate level specialization that will permit Asian American librarians to be marketable.

For example, system librarians are not readily available, they are also not hatched. A Liberal Arts foundation prepares the individual to develop, acquire and earn both management and technical skills. From this generalized foundation librarians have a macro view of the world of information and libraries and are prepared to select a specialization. Select a specialization that has career opportunities and not "dead ends."

II. Continue to re-assess weakness, in a frank and objective manner then reduce and eliminate these obstacles to your progress.

III. Develop your personal silent (invisible) college.

These are personal contracts; individuals with experience, maturity and professional recognition that know you can provide guidance and help you successfully make an open ended career plan.

THEN:

IV. Plan a career strategy before circumstances require implementation.

Recognize that the traditional library profession has both wonderful opportunities and limitations.

Many new library science graduates are planning and going directly into industries that provide services, some of these services are to libraries and the end users.

Plan formal education, for skill development and professional contacts that will assist with your mobility.

Career paths are developed gradually and require constant attention.

In conclusion I would like to propose use of professional literature in human resources like "The Ethnical Executive" by Donald V. Seibert, Former CEO of J.C. Penneys Co., and "What Color is Your Parachute."

There are several excellent publications for career path planning and are available at most libraries.

In closing, let me share with you a short quote from Chapter 5 "Developing a Personal Career Plan" from Seibert.

"No one, to my knowledge, has ever developed a complete personal career plan overnight. It takes time, patience, and a considerable amount of experimentation to settle on the precise direction that one's working life should take. This is not to say, of course, that a person can't settle on a definite occupational goal early point, work toward it, and even eventually achieve it. But the exact path that the individual treads to that ultimate goal often becomes clear only over a rather long period of time.

In some ways, developing into an upper-level executive is a lot like developing into a topflight professional athlete. If you read the sports pages occasionally, it may sometimes seem that certain star athletes burst onto the scene out of nowhere. But actually, a closer study of their background and training always shows years of preparation and hard work."

LIBRARY SERVICES FOR ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

By
SHARAD KARKHANIS

SHARAD KARKHANIS is a professor in the Library Department of Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, N.Y. He is the founding president of APALA and is active in ALA and other professional organizations. In addition to an MLS from Rutgers University, he has an M.A. degree in international relations from Brooklyn College and a Ph.D. in political science from New York University.

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(Remarks made at President's Program on Library Services to "New Americans and to American People of Color," Monday, June 29th, 1987).

Thank you President Minudri.

First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge the fact that recent progress, enhancement of civil rights, improvements in racial equality and equal opportunities that are currently available in this great land and the fruits of which Asian/ Americans are enjoying are the results of many years of struggles weighed by our black brothers and sisters and other minorities in this nation. I believe that Asian Americans must read this nation's history and learn and understand the struggle and treatment of our black Americans, the Jewish immigrants, the Irish Catholics, the Hispanics, and the native Indians. Without their fight and sustained war against discrimination, we would not be where we are. This is not to say that Asian Americans are not subjected to discrimination. As much as we should not forget the civil rights marches of 1950s and 1960s, the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Wounded Knee, we cannot also forget the "Exclusionary Act" that singled out the Chinese Americans, nor can we forget the internment camps of World War II for Japanese Americans that questioned their allegiance and inflicted humiliation on the dedicated Americans of Japanese descent. The murder of a Chinese American in Detroit is too fresh to be easily forgotten. There should not be any doubt that Asian Americans are discriminated against. They are. It is one thing to enjoy the Chinese Szechuan food, or Japanese sushi or Indian currie, but it is another thing to give a job or a promotion to an Asian American. They have to be twice as good as others to get their fair share.

Let me turn my attention to an action agenda for what should be done for Asian Americans in terms of library services. For that, we must understand that:

1) Asian Americans are a diverse group. The Chinese, the Japanese, the Asian Indians, the Philippinos, the Vietnamese, and so on are all Asian Americans. But they do have certain cultural, spiritual, religious and language diversity and identity. This distinction must be understood.

2) The Asian Americans differ in their socio-economic characteristics as well. They range from very rich and sophisticated to very poor and those with extremely traditional patterns.

3) Percentagewise, Asian Americans are the fastest growing minority in America. The 1970 census reported 3.7 million Asian Americans, twice that of the 1970 census. It is estimated that by 1990, the Asian population in America will increase to over 6 million. The Chinese Americans are growing at a faster rate than Japanese Americans. Philippino Americans too have surpassed the growth of Japanese Americans.

4) More than half of the Asian population in America consists of immigrants who arrived in this country after 1980. This means, for more than two million Asian Americans, English is their second language.

In terms of serving this diverse Asian population, I believe that libraries have an important role to play. I will mention a number of strategies that can be used.

1) RECRUITMENT: A good number of Asian American librarians are coming out of the library schools. Recruitment of representative Asian American librarians will make a great deal of difference in reaching the community and building the collection suitable for the Asian American community.

2) COLLECTION BUILDING: An appropriate collection in native languages as well as in English is an important element in serving the Asian community. Perhaps a regional cooperative system whereby different libraries specializing in different Asian languages might better serve the needs of the Asian community. A network of interlibrary loans and traveling collections may allow the libraries to serve more Asian Americans with diverse languages.

3) VIDEO CASSETTE LIBRARIES: A solid collection of video cassettes of recreational and educational nature in native languages would be an attractive feature of the library service. Recently arrived immigrants, particularly the older Asian Americans whose mobility is limited may find these tapes extremely useful.

4) CULTURAL AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS: Well-planned programs focusing on cultural and literary accomplishments as well as recreational nature too can help in bringing Asian Americans closer to the library. For example, an evening with an Asian American writer, poet, novelist can be an intellectually stimulating experience. An evening of Asian music and dance at the library will provide recreation as well as offer a cultural experience to both Asian and other members of the community.

5) INFORMATION NEEDS: Library reference service should be equipped to provide quick answers to many questions of social, cultural and religious nature of the community, including that of Asian American community. The queries on what to wear and what to take as a gift for the wedding of a Buddhist friend of an American family are as important as questions from an Asian American who is puzzled as to what to wear and what is expected of him or her at a Bar Mitzvah of his Jewish friend's son.

6) LANGUAGE CLASSES: As mentioned earlier, more than 50% of Asian Americans have arrived after 1980. A good English language program similar to one at the Queensborough Public Library in Queens, N.Y. would truly help Asian American community.

In conclusion, it is incumbent on the library profession to undertake a giant step in assisting the Asian American community. This vibrant, highly educated and culturally diverse population needs the help, and the libraries have important roles to play in the process of educating, socializing and acculturating the Asian American community.

Asian / Pacific American Librarians Association

– Affiliated with the American Library Association –

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